for 25 years it grew in the shadows...

THE FUNHOUSE

It seemed to be a carnival funhouse just like any other.

Mysterious.

Eerie.

Frightening.

But like any funhouse, beneath all of the shocks and chills, it was just plain *fun*.

Wasn't it?

the carnival creature

Its eyes were large, green, and inhuman.

The nostrils were twisted and flared, like those of a wolf. It's flesh was solid muscle.

It had fingers that were long and bony, with pointed nails and a covering of fur.

The thing was–

A baby!

Just a few weeks old, but a mutant! Little Victor Martin Stryker,son of carny workers Ellen and Conrad Stryker.

Ellen doesn't hate her newborn infant, but she doesn't want it going through life the object of taunts and ridicule. So she kills it. The death of his baby boy causes something to snap inside of Conrad, and he forces Ellen to leave the carnival, at the same time making a vow:

"When you have children again, I'll kill them!"

heritage of horror

Amy Harper is the daughter of Ellen Harper--formerly Ellen *Stryker*.

Amy is a bright teenager who is about to stumble into the most hellish time of her life.

At least she doesn't go it alone.

Every year, in the middle of the summer, Royal City, Maryland, hosted a fair. There was a variety of events: harness racing, art shows, livestock auction, games and thrill rides.

This year, there would be one thrill ride in particular–

Conrad Stryker's FUNHOUSE.

As the carnival has traveled around the country, the funhouse has been the site of many deaths. A giant, furry man with gleaming green eyes has assaulted and killed women, and disemboweled men. Conrad always carried the bodies away from the funhouse so that no one would connect the deaths with the carnival.

In Royal City, the giant's first victim is Janet Middlemeir, safety engineer for the county. She dies, horribly, in the Hall of the Giant Spider.

Conrad disposes of the body just as the fair opens for its first night of business.

He wishes that Gunther would time his murders more carefully....

The hideous...insidious...unpiteous fiend of THE FUNHOUSE!

gunther's gruesome game

Gunther is Conrad's second-born, his child by Zena the fortune teller who also works at the carnival.

Like poor Victor, Gunther is a mutant. But his father doesn't see him as a monster. To Conrad Stryker, the awesome Gunther is the Antichrist. Conrad has accepted Satan as his own god, and hell a place where sinners were rewarded for their sins. As the father of the Antichrist, Conrad took it as his job to see that the boy flourished, to bring Satan's kingdom to earth.

Unfortunately for Amy, and for her companions, Gunther and Conrad are in murderous form the night they decide to go to the fair.

Amy's date is Buzz Klemmet, a handsome, cocky, muscular guy. Amy's best friend, lovely Liz Duncan, is escorted by tall, thin Richie Atterbury, who is the intellectual type.

They get to the fair and, in time, make their way to the deathtrap of Conrad Stryker.

Amy doesn't know, of course, that as the daughter of Ellen Stryker, she is scheduled to die–

ride into terror!

Dizzy from rides like the Octopus, the Tilt-a-Whirl, and the Dive Bomber, the four teens are ready for a few quiet thrills in the funhouse.

Some of the gruesome fright-sights on-hand in this shocker.

On the way over, Amy sees an exhibit in the Freak-o-rama, a monstrous baby in a jar. It had been killed years before, and the sign on the bottle says it was born in 1955--its mother's name Ellen.

Amy wonders, intuitively, if this thing might be her step-brother?

The girl's thoughts return to less chilling horrors as a giant in a Frankenstein mask menaces the foursome in front of the funhouse.

None of the four knows that Janet Middlemeir was killed by a giant who had worn a Frankenstein mask.

None of the teens could possibly know that the giant is Gunther Stryker.

Inside the funhouse, all is delightfully scary until the ride stops. The gondola just sits there in the dark, and the two couples wait patiently for the electricity to come back on.

Suddenly, a huge paw shoots from above!

It yanks Richie from his seat--as though he weighed only a few pounds!

Richie and the paw vanish into the darkness above. Seconds later, something wet and sticky drips onto the three teens who remain--

Richie's blood!

scare trek

The trio decides to leave the car, and, striking match after match, begin to walk toward the exit.

Finally, they reach it--

But the doors won't open!

Liz is the most frightened of all, feeling that the darkness is alive with evil that she can actually touch!

A funhouse car comes rolling by just as the lights come back on. The teens can dimly see something in the seat!

Buzz hacks at it with an axe from an exhibit. The prisoners look--and see that the hatchet is buried in the head of their friend Richie, his brains oozing over the gaping wound!

They realize that he was already dead, but that doesn't stop Buzz from being wretchedly ill.

Just then, Conrad appears and shoots Buzz in the head. His flesh and blood splatter over the girls, as he falls over dead.

As it appears that things couldn't possibly get any worse--they do.

captives of the crazed conrad!

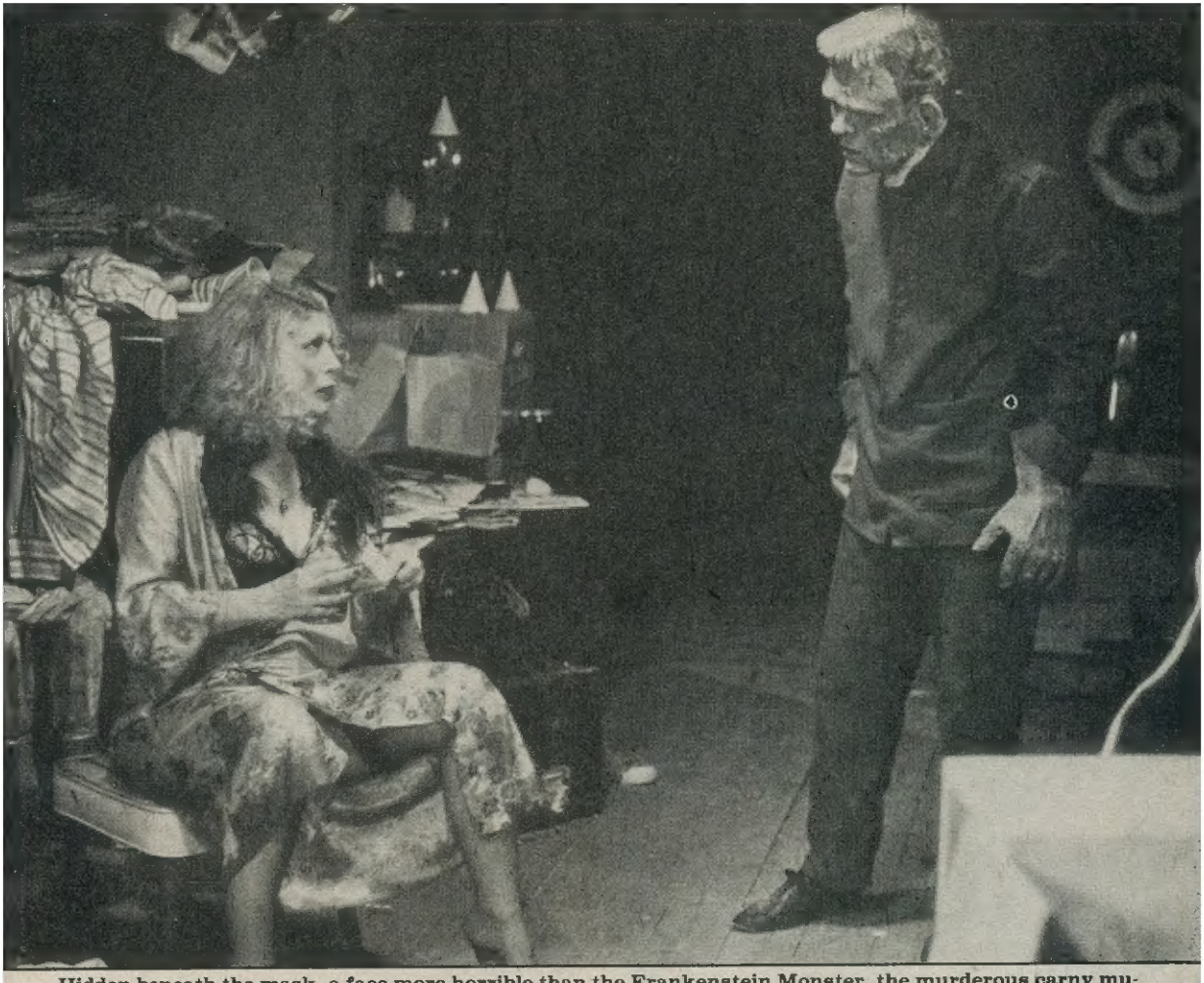
Amy's brother Joey has come to the carnival, and Conrad has taken him prisoner!

The wicked funhouse owner shows the bound boy to Amy. Pretending to go to her brother, to see how he is, Amy spins suddenly.

She had managed to conceal a knife, and drives it into the throat of her mother's first husband.

He fires his gun but the bullet only grazes Amy's cheek. The evil Conrad slips dead to the floor.

In the meantime, Liz, in a panic, has run off! Finding a trapdoor underfoot, she slides into the



Hidden beneath the mask--a face more horrible than the Frankenstein Monster, the murderous carny mutant!

chamber below, thinking that she has found salvation.

She finds, instead, Gunther.

His appearance frightens her utterly! His lips are black, his tongue speckled and alien. His claws are ratlike, and his stilted voice hollow, evil.

Though she pleads for her life, the beast attacks her, savagely....

In another part of the funhouse, Amy frees her brother. They hear Liz scream, and head in that direction.

When they arrive, they wish they'd gone the other way.

Liz is lying on the floor in a sea of her own blood. Her neck is broken, her head bent back like a broken doll's head. Her eyes are staring and sightless, and her belly has been ripped open.

Amy and Joey leave her, and try to find their way out before whatever killed Liz kills them.

But they're too late!

The massive Gunther appears and blocks their route of escape. Fortunately, Amy has Conrad's gun. She empties it into the monster, who refuses to fall down--

Bleeding, he approaches Amy, and tries to rip away her throat. She fires one last bullet into the monster's face. He staggers back, and falls into the massive machinery that makes the cars and exhibits work in the funhouse.

He is mangled and dragged to his death.

Sickened and exhausted but alive, Amy and her brother leave the funhouse....

twisting the screw

Producer Derek Power says of his film, "For this picture to work, it has to be completely overwhelming. As each avenue of escape is cut off, the screw is twisted one more turn...until there is total hysteria."

On-screen and off, one is tempted to add, as audiences will scream and shudder at the exploits of the four trapped teens.

THE FUNHOUSE was shot in an actual car-

First PYSCHO! Then CARRIE! Now, a terror-shower in FUNHOUSE!

The four doubting teens stare at the remains of a mutant.

"Sit right here for the ride of your life...the last ride!"

nival, built in the 1940s, with rides from that period adding to the creepy flavor of the film. The carnival was located in Akron, Ohio and dismantled, shipped to North Miami, Florida where the picture was shot.

Once the carnival was erected on the Norin Studio lot, production designer Mort Rabinowitz added the funhouse set.

Rabinowitz describes the funhouse as the type of place which haunts peoples' dreams.There's a ten-foot-tall gorilla head through whose mouth the funhouse ride runs; a wall which vanishes, revealing a huge, two-foot-wide, ever-staring eyeball; a room of phantasmagoric mirrors; an immense spider's web, complete with a giant spider; and a huge Fat Lady who actually becomes more frightening as the film slithers along.

Yet, most terrifying of all is the head of Gunther. Hidden beneath the Frankenstein mask, it isn't revealed until the very end of the movie.

The special make-up for the mutant antichrist was created by Rick Baker and Craig Reardon. It is made of latex and is typical of the excellent work done by the young makeup artists.

tobe and doba

Director Tobe Hooper didn't want just a stuntman to play Gunther, someone who would lumber through the part with little acting ability.

Dining out one night at a local Miami restaurant, he and Derek Power watched a street mime do his routine. Tall, commanding, and a fine performer, the California native, one Wayne Doba, was hired on the spot to play the monster.

Tobe Hooper is perhaps best-known for having directed the cult-classic THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE.

In case you missed that horror show, it is in the same (bleeding) vein as THE FUNHOUSE.

It's the story of the rampaging fiend known as Leatherface, who wears a mask of dried flesh and uses a chainsaw to dismember his victims.

Like MOTEL HELL, a top-shocker of last year, the human remains are sold as meat products at the gas station of Leatherface's brother.

In addition to the saw butcherings, there are also impalings, exhumed corpses, and caved-in skulls.

Truly, THE FUNHOUSE is a worthy successor to that earlier work!

Hooper began his career shooting television commercials in Texas, moving on to documentaries and short subjects. THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE was his second film, and was followed by the critically acclaimed four-hour TV movie 'SALEM'S LOT.

Now he has done THE FUNHOUSE, of which he has this to say. "For me, this is the ultimate in terror. It's very definitely a horror movie, as opposed to a psychological thriller. We have a monster who goes berserk within the theatrical world of the carnival--which, in turn, is distilled to

The face that launched a thousand shivers waiting to kill unsuspecting fairgoers in the deadly depths of THE FUNHOUSE.

its finest, scariest elements: Chills, thrills, and spills."

The Executive Producer of THE FUNHOUSE Is Mace Neufeld, who like Hooper is no stranger to the world of the weird. Among his previous films were THE OMEN, DAMIEN: THE OMEN TWO, and OMEN THREE: THE FINAL CONFLICT.

Writer Larry Block has primarily written for television, and he is presently developing a science fiction film for a movie of the week to be produced by Ivan Tors.

last but not least... a killer cast

Starring are a variety of talented performers, most of whom have appeared in fright or SF films. The players include Sylvia Miles (of THE SENTINEL, an underrated devil flick of several years back), William Finley (who played Bobbi, Michael Caine's alter-ego in Brian DePalma's DRESSED TO KILL;also co-star of THE FURY, SIMON, and PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE), Kevin Conway (SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE), Cooper Huckabee, and Elizabeth Berridge.

To put it mildly, their performances will kill you. And if *they* don't--

THE FUNHOUSE *will*!

END

Looks like the monster's crush on this lady will be her last.